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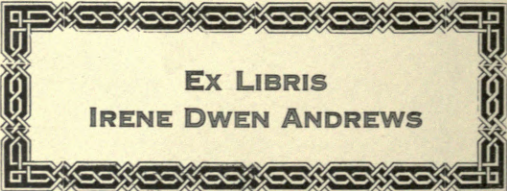
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THE CASTING VOTE

BY
GEORGE CROSBIE



THE TALBOT PRESS LTD.
85 Talbot Street, Dublin



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IRENE DWEN ANDREWS

THE CASTING VOTE

OR

PADDY FLAHERTY'S VISION

BY

GEORGE CROSBIE



DUBLIN

THE TALBOT PRESS LIMITED

85 TALBOT STREET

1920

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

PADDY FLAHERTY, a mountainy Farmer (rather given to drinking and dreaming).

TOM DOOLEY, Master of the Workhouse (loves rumination and elections).

One person plays all characters { DOCTOR DOLAN, who bears a strong resemblance to
DAN CASEY, a Farmer, who has been more than once mistaken for
MR. FARRELLY, the Bank Manager.

One person plays all characters { DOCTOR O'ROURKE, who might pass for own brother to
THE POLICE SERGEANT, a "retiring" member of the Force, and very like
MR. KELLY, a blunt outspoken person.

DOCTOR HYDE, who says nothing but works hard.

One person { A NAMELESS PAUPER, fond of irritating interruption, and
AN OLD WOMAN, who lives with her Grandchild in the mountains (the dead image of the Pauper).

One person { PATSY HAYFIELD, a Leprecaun that
JULIA LEARY strongly favours in appearance.

One person { KITTY PRIMROSE, a Cluricaun who talks like
MOLLY CASSIDY, an attractive Girl, whose likeness is striking to
NONEEN, Paddy Flaherty's Daughter.

The action of this little Play takes place in the prehistoric days of Ireland.

THE CASTING VOTE

OR

PADDY FLAHERTY'S VISION

PROLOGUE.

*(A hillside in the moonlight. Pat Flaherty, a
"small" mountainy farmer, rather tipsy).*

FLAHERTY (*singing*) :

For you must all acknowledge, oh !
I made good use of College, oh !
When I was there, completely bare
I stripped the tree of knowledge, oh !

'Tis true for me, and for all the good it done me,
I might as well have picked a Skeeboary bush.
There's no doubt Dan Connolly have a worthy
call. To hear him sing "The Peeler and the
Goat" would make you cry, and begob you
couldn't tell whether 'twas for the goat or the
policeman you'd be most sorry. And Mick
Sheehan, too, can rise it with any boy in the
barony. They're the pleasant company to spend
an evening with, only for that crooked little
caffler Jack Shea. What with his ghosts and
his fairies he'd be enough to frighten a man if
he weren't over to America. Be the teeth of

Finn MacCool's yellow pup a few months there would cure anyone of his religion, not to mind spirits and other unnatural beliefs. 'Tis a long and weary road home, and I think I'll have a bit of a rest and a drain (*producing a bottle*). I'll lighten my load, anyway. Faith, I've drunk to everyone and everything I know. I forgot, be japers, I never once thought of the good people 'Tis my prayers I'll neglect next. (*Rising up and bowing all round*). Here's slanthé and the best of good luck to my little friends. Boys, the toast is "The Fairies." (*Sits down after drinking, nods, and mutters "College" and "Knowledge"*). (*CLURICAUN enters*).

CLURICAUN. All the world's asleep except my comrades. They, beneath the full and yellow moon, make great festivity, and I, instead of lightly footing it on the meadow grass, wait here for timesome Patsy Hay, the crawling, cranky Leprecaun. 'Tis time he'd come. Already Shaun Gow's merry chaunter sinks and swells, for I hear its lively notes come rustling through the leaves. What keeps Patsy, the clumsy, churlish rogue, I wonder?

FLAHERTY (*waking up*). Be the holy smoke, what's this at all—a Cluricaun, by all the powers of war. Sure no, that whiskey blinds you like the noonday sun. Some little mountain child that's lost her way, it must be. (The moonlight makes it hard to see who 'tis. Faith, a fairy she

is and no mistake. Queen Mauve herself, I'd say, with her red cap and pretty little petticoat; she's looking too for someone, I'll be bound. 'Tis not for me, I'm sure, the little darling's seeking. (LEPRECAUN *enters. A crabbed old chap*).

LEPRECAUN. This is the place, is it, I'm to get me orders. 'Tis the quare life I lead. Orders, orders every night. I might as well be a misfortunate mortal man with all the work and worry they puts on me. I think I'll start a Trades Union for myself and be President, Secretary, and Standing Committee all in one.

CLURICAUN. Patsy, Patsy, are you there? The cock'll crow before your work's half done.

FLAHERTY (*very interested*). 'Tis the funny pair they are. Begob, I'll watch them.

LEPRECAUN. I'm here, I'm here, don't I tell you. 'Tis that Peggy Cowslip I know that's calling.

CLURICAUN. Late again, Patsy Hayfield, you grumbling old thief of the world. I'll tell Mauve about you.

LEPRECAUN. Kitty Primrose! as I'm a leaping Leprecaun. Sweetheart, if I'd but known 'twas you'd be here, I'd be waiting ever since the cows were druv to milk.

FLAHERTY. The gallivanting old vagabone.

PRIMROSE. Sweetheart! Why, you saucy Leprecaun, how often have I told you that you'd better mend your manners. You grumbling

good-for-nothing. I'd rather never dance again than be your partner. Sweetheart! Yes, when frost and snow make my pretty sisters of the woods to grow.

LEPRECAUN. You are unkind, my little Primrose. You know all night long I do your bidding, just as though you were Queen Mauve herself. Didn't I dive into the great blue sea and scrape the colour off a mackerel that your dress might shimmer like some brilliant gem and seize the flighting pigeon to procure the gloss that shines upon his swelling throat for you to spread upon your dainty wings? No thought now of the rheumatics I got through bathing out of season or the limp I go with from my fearful fall when the pigeon shook me from the topmost bough. But woman! woman! you are all alike.

FLAHERTY. Begor the old blackguard tells the truth now and then.

PRIMROSE. I've no time for further converse. Mauve will be raging at the hours I've lost. Did you cure the widow's cow as you were instructed?

LEPRECAUN. Oh faith, she's dead. I sang the wrong song, and begor she died of it.

PRIMROSE. How shocking. Wait till the Queen hears, and Thady's rick of straw that was so moist. Thady that has spared the rath where we hold revel.

LEPRECAUN. I'd ill-luck there too. I dried it up too quick, and faith it went alight.

PRIMROSE. You blundering Leprecaun. Your limp, and your rheumatics too, will be but trifles to what she'll give you now.

LEPRECAUN. Sure 'twas thinking of you I must be, sweetheart.

PRIMROSE. Sweetheart again. Pray keep your distance.

FLAHERTY. 'Tis a primrose she is, I'm thinking, and begor I'm sorry for the old buck for all.

PRIMROSE. And the miller's dam, too. The miller that would not cut the willows nor the sweet dog briar, because he thought we might be angry.

LEPRECAUN. I'd the worst luck there again. Didn't the whole concern, with all the water, fall atop of me when I thought to mend it.

PRIMROSE. 'Tis boycotted through you we'll be and no mistake. They won't leave a white thorn hedge nor a woodbine spray on the whole countryside. I'm off to tell Mauve.

LEPRECAUN (*walking up and down, wringing his hands*). Was there ever such a misfortunate?

FLAHERTY (*stepping out from hiding*). Ha, ha, my old lad. Wait a minute till I catch you. And then you'll see the crock of gold I'll get.

LEPRECAUN (*walking up and down and coming nearer to FLAHERTY*). What'll Mauve do to

me at all, at all, I wonder? Turn me into an evicted tenant, maybe.

FLAHERTY (*catching LEPRECAUN by coat-tails*). Ho, ho, my meandering old astronomer, I have you fast.

LEPRECAUN. What's this? (*Sees FLAHERTY*). Lay go o' me, I say. Tear me new cobweb coat, would you? Is it a grasshopper or a spider you'd like to be?

FLAHERTY. Neither, my old toxicologist.

LEPRECAUN (*threatening*). I'll kill your cows.

FLAHERTY (*laughing*). Bedad you may, for I haven't any.

LEPRECAUN. I'll burn your house.

FLAHERTY. Oh, that you can, for any alteration would be an improvement, I'm thinking.

LEPRECAUN (*angrily*). I'll turn you —

FLAHERTY. Yeah, stop worrying your muddled brain, my old cock, for I'm in the same case as my house and any change would be for the better.

LEPRECAUN. You don't tell me so. Then you and I are friends. But lay go me coat, for 'tis the only one I have.

FLAHERTY. Not likely, my old hero, till I get me crock of gold.

LEPRECAUN. On the word of a fairy, you'll have it and better.

FLAHERTY. I was always a fool, but still I'll

trust you. Better than a crock of gold—what's that?

LEPRECAUN. Many things. Well, you see money has always gone through your pockets—like the divil through Athlone—in the hell of a hurry, laving you as poor as ever. I'll give you something that will be as sure as an old age pension.

FLAHERTY. Be gonnie the old thief is right.

LEPRECAUN. What about—say a Government job?

FLAHERTY. Divil a better. Make me a police sergeant and I'm your man.

LEPRECAUN. A sergeant. Yeah, no. Why not a county inspector?

FLAHERTY. That's good, too, but I dunno—the sergeant for me.

LEPRECAUN. Arrah why?

FLAHERTY. Well, you see, he never has a thirsty night. For all he need do when he feels dry is put in his head at Moll Goggin's pub, and he'll always get four or five drinks with none to claim them, for the boys that paid for them would be nearly in the next parish before he could sit down; so he could then, as the sign-board says, "consume them on the premises" at his dead ease.

LEPRECAUN. It must be a fine job, no doubt.

FLAHERTY. Steady there. Hold your holt awhile. 'Twon't do, 'twon't do at all, my friend.

Sure 'tis prosecuting Moll, my own first cousin, I might be, or my best neighbour. 'Twon't do, I say.

LEPRECAUN. That's so, indeed. I respect your fine feelings.

FLAHERTY. Couldn't I be parish priest, now?

LEPRECAUN. Why not, yeah, or Pope of Rome.

FLAHERTY. They're good jobs, too. I might do worse. Little to do and plenty to ate. Whoa, stand back there. 'Twon't do though for me, me bouchalawn. No, no, not likely. Why, I'd have to live good and respectable.

LEPRECAUN. And be happy.

FLAHERTY. Not me. No more nights with the boys. No fun at a fair or a wedding or a wake. No, I'm not looking to be Pope, priest, or parson.

LEPRECAUN. 'Tis the divil to please you, Paddy Flaherty. Perhaps 'tis leader of the Irish people you'd like to be.

FLAHERTY. Arrah, is it an omadhaun you take me for, me old antiquarian. With every clown in the country instructing me what to do and ne'er a slip of a gorsoon out of the fourth standard but thinks he could teach me statesmanship. You must do better than that, me old Cromwellian, and it should not be hard if you only try enough.

LEPRECAUN. The President of the United States wouldn't do, I suppose?

FLAHERTY. Me ambition's not aequil to it.

LEPRECAUN. Lloyd George maybe.

FLAHERTY. Me modesty forbids. Hurroo, begonnies I have it. Ha, ha, of all the damned fools—sure I never once thought of it. Put it there, me old flick. Why, King O'Toole and bold Brien were only casual labourers to him.

LEPRECAUN. 'Tis the divil himself he wants to be, I think.

FLAHERTY. Yeah, not at all, man. Better than that again. What about being Chairman of the Board of Guardians. That's the job where the money is, and power. Patrick Joseph Alphonsus O'Flaherty, Cee Bee Gee, be japers.

LEPRECAUN. There's a load off my chest, for he's a decent boy. I thought 'twas Bellzibub himself he thought to be. How are you, Mr. Chairman, sir; for that you'll surely be.

FLAHERTY. Good man yourself, but you must be thirsty, sure.

LEPRECAUN. Well, I don't mind if I am, seeing 'tis you.

FLAHERTY (*taking a drink of the bottle*). So here's to the Board of Guardians. (*Hands bottle to LEPRECAUN*).

LEPRECAUN (*drinking*). And to its Chairman, and faith as you're such pleasant company,

depend on me you'll have the casting vote besides.

FLAHERTY. Hurroo. (*Sits down and nods off to sleep with bottle in his hand.* LEPRECAUN goes off).

FLAHERTY (*sings drunkenly*):

For you must all acknowledge, oh,
I made good use of college, oh,
When I was there they used to stare
Because 'I hated porridge, oh.

THE PLAY.

I.

(*Master's Office at Union.* MASTER alone at writing table).

MASTER (*ruminating*). Well, of all the places in the world for surprises, commend me to a workhouse. I've seen the best in the land take up their lodging here, and faith we've bred, too, all the learned professions, not to mention tinkers and card-thrick men, but Paddy Flaherty, Chairman, beats all I ever seen. (OLD PAUPER enters).

OLD PAUPER. The cook wants to know what he's to do with the donkey that's strayed into the potato patch.

MASTER. Wisha, wisha, and they say I don't earn my pay. Tell him to boil it in the soup for the hospital patients, and don't be bothering me, an' me too making up the amount that the respectable ratepayers will have to pay up for you and your like.

OLD PAUPER. Not forgetting yourself, Mr. Dooley; sure you're more expense than 100 of us.

MASTER. No more of your back chat, and be off. (*Exit* OLD PAUPER).

MASTER. Paddy Flaherty, C.B.G., and be the casting vote. There's no knowing, after all, what may happen to a man in this world. Sure a short time ago I'd have said I'd as good a chance of being Lord Lieutenant of Ireland as he had of being Chairman here and he a drunken little farmer with land that a self-respecting Jack Snipe wouldn't fatten on. But you never know your luck, as the wren said when she swallowed the fish-hook for an early worm. (*Enter* OLD PAUPER).

OLD PAUPER. The cook says the donkey is lying down in the cabbages.

MASTER. Is it disturbing me again you are, my old grammarian?

OLD PAUPER. There's a name to put on me.

MASTER. Tell the cook to get a feather bed or an hospital ambulance for him, and me making out the rates by trigonometry and the

rule of three. I'll complain you, so I will, to the new Chairman.

OLD PAUPER. You will, lesh. Take care of what names you call me, for I've known him since his boots cost fourpence.

MASTER. Be off, I say, for here he comes. (OLD PAUPER *exits*. Enter FLAHERTY, *clean and respectable*).

MASTER. My respects, worthy Chairman, Mr. P. J. A. O'Flaherty, C.B.G., no less.

FLAHERTY. Thanks, Tom Dooley, thanks. The people's choice, you know, the people's choice.

MASTER. Yes, indeed, Mr. Chairman, by the skin of your teeth—I mean by the casting vote. It done the trick, however.

FLAHERTY. 'Twas a worthy loft that same casting vote, I'm thinking.

MASTER. Better to be born lucky than rich, Mr. Chairman, you know. Did you hear the news, and great news 'tis for you?

FLAHERTY. What's that?

MASTER. Dan Leary the gateman died last night, and half the country's looking for the job.

FLAHERTY. Sure I hadn't ever a word to say again Daniel. But, be all the goats in Kerry, I'm a made man. Hurroo! Crock of Gold, how are you? I wouldn't sell my chances now for the best farm of land in Ireland and the Bull of

Bashan to stock it. (SERGEANT OF POLICE enters).

FLAHERTY. By the black feather in the tail of Madge Murphy's game cock, what's this perambulating statute book doing here at all? Maybe I bate the police unbeknownst or was seen in Moll Goggin's after hours.

SERGEANT (*salutes, smiling*).

FLAHERTY. I'd best be civil to him, anyway.

SERGEANT. Good morning, your worship, Mr. Chairman.

FLAHERTY. Praises! There's civility and discipline. Begor, I'll be condescending, too. Good-day, yourself, Head Constable. Did you want me?

SERGEANT. Oh, dear no, not at all.

FLAHERTY. That was damned awkward; I must be careful, for he's a robustic man.

SERGEANT. Just a word, your worship. You know Dan Leary's dead, and I was thinking the place'll have to be filled.

FLAHERTY. Oh, now, I take him—for all he's a bobby. (*Contemptuously aside*). An' his was the job I thought to have.

SERGEANT. You see, the force isn't what it was.

MASTER. Thank God and the Board of Guardians for that.

SERGEANT. And I was thinking that the

gate-porter's situation would just suit me. (OLD PAUPER *enters*).

OLD PAUPER. Mr. Dooley, the cook, says the donkey's dead in the turnips.

MASTER. Think of that now and me consulting with the Chairman of the Board and the right hand of the Government. For the love of God, Sergeant—I mean Head Constable, or Inspector General—remove that 'ooman, or the cook, or the donkey, for between them I'm so bothered that I think I must clap a shilling extra on the rates.

FLAHERTY. The Lord forbid.

SERGEANT. Move on (*to the PAUPER*), or I'll move you. You obstructing the forces of the Crown and the work of the Guardians, and begob I'm not sure but it's high treason. (OLD PAUPER *exits hurriedly*).

SERGEANT. Mr. Dooley there will say a word for me, or else I'll have him in the dock for furiously riding a bicycle to the terror of his Majesty's subjects and likewise a pig that he bounced again.

MASTER. You're wrong, 'twas the pig did the bouncing and I did the bumping. My head's sore still.

SERGEANT (*whispering to FLAHERTY*). There's a cask of the best.

FLAHERTY. Whiskey! I smell it! Ah, Sergeant, that give us all more eloquence than

kissing the Blarney Stone. I could hear that kind of talk all day and not get tired.

MASTER. True for you.

FLAHERTY. Mr. Dooley's the divil for samples, Sergeant. Why, he'd beat yourself at the game. We'll have the cask up.

SERGEANT. Yes, Mr. Chairman—after the election. It's at Moll Goggin's till then.

FLAHERTY (*aside*). And I never had such a thirst on me, but it won't be long, however. Well, Sergeant, I like you, and I like your way of doing business, and I'll favourably consider your application—on the day of the election. (*Exit SERGEANT*).

MASTER. Begor 'tis the old hand he is. He'll do me credit, I see. (*Aloud*). Worthy Chairman, my respects to you. Here's more coming prospecting for the job.

FLAHERTY. By all the cocoa-nuts in County Kerry, if 'tisin't my own cousin. I wonder what he wants with his fifty acres and six cows. Why, he wouldn't give me the time of day anymore than if I was a beggar before. He can't be after the gate-porter's lodge, you bet. (*DAN CASEY enters*).

CASEY. Arrah, Paddy allay, I'm glad to see you C.B.G. 'Tis the right man for the place you are, and no lie. (*Aside*). God forgive me. The old stock, you see, is proud of you.

FLAHERTY. Thank you kindly, Dan. (*Aside*). What's the old heathen's game, I'm wondering?

CASEY. So there's a little situation going at this house or college, I hear, Paddy Flaherty, that would just do my son, Dan.

FLAHERTY (*aside*). So that's what he's after. (*Aloud*). Yes, indeed, a responsible post, as the advertisement calls it.

CASEY. Do you know, Paddy, a nice heifer or a filly would do well on your land, and a trifle of ten pounds to stock it would be good, wouldn't it?

FLAHERTY. Oh, the divil a better. (*Aside*). A crock of gold, a cask of whiskey, and a heifer and ten pounds. Why, a fool could see whether or which. (*Aloud*). Oh, send the heifer and the money down at once.

CASEY. I was just saying to myself they would be safer with me till the polling day.

FLAHERTY (*aside*). The old nagur.

MASTER. Aisy there, Chairman. The market's rising.

FLAHERTY. Right you are, my old logician. You see, Dan, I'll consider your son's qualifications on the—polling day. (*Exit CASEY*).

MASTER. Faith then, Chairman, there's a power of good things offering, and I'll be bound here's another bidder coming, but not a buyer. (*Enter JULIA LEARY*).

FLAHERTY. Is it me you want, my little girl. She can't be looking for the job, any way.

JULIA. If you're the Chairman, sir, it is, indeed. But you won't be mad?

FLAHERTY. Indeed I won't, my little pet.

JULIA. My brother's looking to be gate-porter.

FLAHERTY. Oh, good Lord.

MASTER. How much have you?

JULIA. Not one penny piece. My father Daniel Leary, he that had the gate, left us with nothing but my brother Dan and three little sisters and 'tis on the road we'll be, or in the house itself, if you don't help us, Mr. Chairman.

FLAHERTY. Ochone, ochone, why didn't I have that crock of gold.

MASTER. His worship's busy, but Julia, your application will be attended to.

FLAHERTY. Ah, that it will, I promise you. (*Aside*). But that my own little girl was taken by my sister, how do I know but she might too be begging help from neighbours. Milliamurder, but it's cruel to lose my chance.

JULIA (*weeping*). 'Twas true for them that told me 'twas no use. Orphans get cold comfort everywhere.

MASTER. That's no lie, anyway, unless they come into the workhouse.

FLAHERTY. Not always, child; some have the luck to strike Pat Flaherty. (*Aside*). But that

little heifer. I wonder was it red or black? No matter. Your brother will have my vote, Julia. Aye, and me casting vote again all the world.

JULIA. God bless and prosper you, Paddy Flaherty, and heaven reward you for your kindness. (*Exit*).

FLAHERTY. Faith 'tis only there I think I'll get any. My lovely heifer.

MASTER. Yes, and 'tis about all you deserve, you ignorant omadhaun. I'm off. (*Exit*).

FLAHERTY. Now, who was the damned fool that said honesty was the best policy. There's one thing certain, he never gave a fair trial to both. And me Board of Works instalment coming due. I see there's nothing left but to send them on a slice of my honesty—and see how much they'll allow me for it.

II.

(*Master's Office at Union.* MASTER *at table with papers*).

MASTER (*ruminating*). Of all the ignoramuses that ever served the ratepayers as C.B.G. Paddy Flaherty is foremost. I knew something would occur when to that honourable and lucrative office they appointed a mountainy man. That's the kind of thing that always happens

when you set a beggar on horseback. You must be born and educated to such a position to become it. Why, if this continues, every job may as well be filled by competitive examination. (FLAHERTY *entering*).

FLAHERTY. So Dan have got the job.

MASTER. Yes, and by your casting vote, and you throwing away good money that way.

FLAHERTY. Yes, indeed, worse luck, and good drink too. (OLD PAUPER *hands letter to FLAHERTY*).

FLAHERTY. What's this, what's this? Shake hands, Tom Dooley, here's luck.

MASTER. What's luck to those who won't take it. What the devil is it at all?

FLAHERTY. Great luck, my boy. Read that. A vacancy this time and no mistake. The clerk's promoted to Dublin.

MASTER. Well, I never. Get me a drink, worthy Chairman, or I'll faint.

FLAHERTY. Now's our time, my fine fellow. By the Bells of Shandon, but we're made men.

MASTER. I'll believe you when I hold the money.

FLAHERTY. Here's the bank itself coming to us, begor. (*Enter Mr. FARRELLY, Bank Manager*).

FARRELLY. Evening, Mr. Flaherty, and good-day, Dooley; nice weather.

MASTER. You may say that.

FARRELLY. Business good here, I suppose?

FLAHERTY. Faith, as far as I can see, it generally always is, Mr. Farrelly, but this looks like being our tourish season. (*Aside to Master*). Look how I'll take the old Hebrew down, that would not give £5 on my name. (*Aloud*). Why, I don't believe we could find a bed for your honour, if that is what you were looking for, in the whole house.

FARRELLY. Thanks, don't require one just yet, Chairman. I called about a vacancy you have for the clerkship. I hear Brennan is promoted.

MASTER. That he is, but faith I wouldn't have thought that you'd be looking for it.

FARRELLY. Well, not exactly either, ha! ha! but I have a brother!

FLAHERTY. How unnatural!

FARRELLY. That might accept it if only to prevent Kelly, who, I understand, is also a candidate, from robbing the ratepayers—by his incompetence.

MASTER. Oh, 'tis you, Manager, that was always the friend of that long-tailed long-suffering race the ratepayers.

FARRELLY. You are right, Dooley, and do you know, Chairman, if you wanted an advance, say up to a hundred or so, our bank is very liberal.

FLAHERTY (*aside to Dpooley*). What did I say, Thomas Dooley, pigs is riz for us.

FARRELLY. And for you, Dooley, that little matter of security you went can stand over—indefinitely.

MASTER. Oh, I knew you were always a gentleman.

FARRELLY. Not at all, not at all. Good-day, my friends, a very good day. (*Exit FARRELLY*).

MASTER. Worthy Chairman, I'm proud of you. Put the hand there. (*OLD PAUPER enters*).

PAUPER. Mr. Dooley, Mr. Dooley, there's a pig in the parlour, and the steward says you'd best come down and talk to him.

MASTER. Will you go to blazes or send the deputy to entertain him. Don't you see I'm busy with the Chairman. Be off out of that. (*Exit OLD PAUPER*). Faith, I hear more money jingling. Here's the Kelly gang on the war-path. (*Enter KELLY*).

KELLY. My dear Chairman, how goes it? I'm a candidate for the clerkship, you know, and won't be beaten by that thieving Farrelly, you bet. Name the price.

MASTER (*holding up his hands*). How shocking! What want of taste! (*OLD PAUPER enters excitedly*).

PAUPER. Mr. Dooley, come for the love of God; the pig in the parlour has the deputy's calf.

MASTER. It's a farmyard they're making of the place, by the holy. Anyhow, I'm out of this. Some men don't know there's a L.G.B. in Dublin. (*Exeunt MASTER and PAUPER*).

FLAHERTY. I like your spirit, Mr. Kelly, and I'll consider.

KELLY. Say £150 down and I'm your man.

FLAHERTY (*aside*). A crock of gold, no less. Go aisy, Pat Flaherty, maybe there's more in it. (*Aloud*). Good-day, Mr. Kelly; good luck. (*Exit KELLY*).

FLAHERTY. Be the fore paw of the black cat of the great O'Flaherty, that's grand. Noneen, my little daisy, and you away in Dublin town, 'tis little you think how hard your dissolute old father is working to make a fortune for you. Another visitor; begor, I didn't hear the matron was tuck ill. (*Enter MOLLY CASSIDY*).

MOLLY. You're Mr. Flaherty, I think, the C.B.G.

FLAHERTY. I'll not deny it, Miss.

MOLLY. I want a favour.

FLAHERTY. 'Twould go hard with Paddy Flaherty when he'd refuse the like to a pretty girl.

MOLLY. I hope so, surely. (*Smiling sweetly on him*). You see, I'm engaged.

FLAHERTY (*aside*). Be the powers, I'm sorry. I was half thinking she heard of the crock of gold and 'twas myself she was after.

MOLLY. To Joey Clancy.

FLAHERTY. The lucky divil.

MOLLY (*putting her handkerchief to her eyes*). But we can't marry because we're too poor.

FLAHERTY. Begor 'tis a crime that same poverty that 'tis hard to escape committing.

MOLLY. He's been assistant clerk for ten years, and if he does not get the vacancy (*weeping*), sure 'tis an old maid I'm like to die.

FLAHERTY. Thunder and turf, as the Pope said long ago when he heard that Mushera mountains was struck by lightning, I'm a ruined man. (*MASTER entering*).

MASTER. What's this? Molly Cassidy here, and the Chairman. Anything to stop him from making a damn fool of himself. Murder, thieves, police, fire. (*Exit*).

FLAHERTY (*sadly*). 'Tis no use, Tom Dooley, 'tis no use. I was never made to be a public man. You'll have my vote, Miss, and as I'm throwing it away, the casting vote besides.

MOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. May you always be C.B.G. (*Exit*).

FLAHERTY. Thanks for your wish, darling. My poor Noneen, I'm just waiting to meet the blackguard who said virtue was it's own reward. I wonder how much drink Moll Goggin would give me for mine?

III.

(*Master's Office. MASTER sitting at table.*)

MASTER (*ruminating*). 'Tis two doctors I'll get to certify he's not all there. Joey Clancy Clerk of the Union—by the Chairman's casting vote. Everything lately is carried by the casting vote. 'Tis unnatural. Did anyone ever see such luck for a gomock that can make no use of it? He'll destroy public life entirely. I must do something.

OLD PAUPER. Come down, Mr. Dooley, there's a clucking hen in the board-room and the members can't hear themselves talk.

MASTER. An' a good job too to stop their cackle. Oh, pluck the feathers off her and tell them 'tis a goose and to make her C.B.G. with my compliments. Get out. Don't you see I'm busy trying to hide their blunders from the auditors. (*Exit PAUPER.*)

FLAHERTY (*gloomily*). Morning, Master.

MASTER. Yeah, lave me alone; nice sort of a Chairman you are. I'll tell you you'll have neither luck nor grace when you throw away chances. 'Tis backing horses you ought try, but even there begob you'd be bet on the post, though the second horse was in the next parish.

FLAHERTY. Faith you're not far out. Old Moll is pressing for a settlement, and the Board of Works want their money.

MASTER. Yes, and I'm thinking Joey Clancy will pay all.

FLAHERTY. 'Tis a hard world truly—for an honest, virtuous man.

MASTER. Honesty is like beauty, Paddy Flaherty. It never boiled the pot; and 'tis sold up I'll be over that surety. (OLD PAUPER *enters*).

PAUPER. Come down, come down, Mr Dooley. There's destruction ablow in the house.

MASTER. It's the old cock comes in after the hen, I suppose, and the Board wants to kill and eat him for lunch.

PAUPER. 'Tis worse than that; Dr. Hegarty of the dispensary has gone off, they say.

MASTER. What's that you tell me?

PAUPER. Yes, to America, with the money, or the medicine, or some girl, maybe. He's gone away, anyhow. (*Exit*).

FLAHERTY (*rubbing his hands*). Is it a ceegar or a drink for you, Tom Dooley? Fortune, you see, isn't always the deludering female she's represented. The dispensary vacant. A crock of gold—no, but a mine of gold's coming our way.

MASTER. Lave me alone. What's the use? Sure you'll spoil all again.

FLAHERTY. Not likely this time. Money carries the day with me now, no fear.

MASTER. I'd not put a sixpenny bit on you, anyhow. (*Aside*). I'll watch you, my old Lotharian. I'll give instructions that no female under fifty will be allowed to see you till the election's over.

FLAHERTY. This time we'll make up for all our losses.

MASTER. I hope so, but I have my doubts. I never see any good come of flinging away fortune and money.

FLAHERTY. Of all the cantankerous old astrologers I ever see you beat all. Don't you know this is the third time? £250 is my price. Any bidders? Going, going.

MASTER. Whist, you ownshuck. There's somebody coming.

FLAHERTY. My little Noneen with a fortune, Moll Goggins' slate wiped clean, the Board of Works contented. Paddy Flaherty, C.B.G., my buck, I would like to see a man of them all that would then thread on the tail of your coat. (*Dr. DOLAN enters*).

FLAHERTY. I beg your pardon, Doctor, I didn't see you.

DOLAN. Oh, Mr. Chairman, I just called to secure your vote and influence. You know Dr. Hegarty's gone?

FLAHERTY. You're welcome, Doctor. How's his reverence?

DOLAN. Oh, my uncle the P.P. is very well indeed and is most anxious that you should help me all you can.

FLAHERTY. The Sergeant, the Bank, and the Church. All have solicited my vote and influence. By the flower in the coat of the Lord Lieutenant, I wasn't so far wrong when I picked to be Chairman of the B.G.

MASTER. I know, Doctor, he'd like to see you in the job, but expenses are heavy these times. What between postage stamps and notepaper, writing to his friends about you, 'twould take a matter of £250 to carry the election, besides the rejoicings when you win.

DOLAN. And the salary is £120 a year?

MASTER. 'Twould be three hundred to any but yourself. You see, I got him to take off £50 for discount because of the priest.

DOLAN. £200 would be too much, but I am not refusing. And you'll remember me, gentlemen, as the fellow in the song says, on the polling day. (*Exit*).

FLAHERTY. Close with him Tom, we'd better.

MASTER. No, no, worthy Chairman. I think, like a certain other ex-President of a Department, "we'll wait and see," and, by the holy poker, I think there's another buyer in the

market. If 'tis not Doctor O'Rourke is coming, you can call my sainted mother a jackdaw.

MASTER. Oh, Doctor, 'tis proud I am to see you here this morning, and how's your brother, our eloquent and honourable member?

O'ROURKE. He's well, indeed, Mr. Dooley. Introduce me, pray, to our C.B.G. I've a letter for him from my worthy brother.

MASTER. Is there much in it?

O'ROURKE. Why, I believe if he addressed it to the Speaker it would be regarded as a notable contribution—to the debate.

MASTER (*disappointed*). Oh, indeed, is that all? Worthy Chairman, my noble friend, Dr. O'Rourke, desires more acquaintance with you. He's brother, you know, to that famous man, our excellent M.P.

FLAHERTY (*beaming*). 'Tis glad I am to see you, Doctor. (*Aside*). That's the truth, anyway, if he's a four hundred pounder.

O'ROURKE. 'Tis about the vacant dispensary.

FLAHERTY. You shall have it—I hope.

MASTER (*aside to O'ROURKE*). You know a side-car to drive up here on the election day would cost a power of money. What between the price of oats and a drink for the driver. Let me see. I'd not say you'd have much change out of £400. (*Whispering*). Out of respect to your brother I'll try, however, if he'd take three.

O'ROURKE. But 'tis not for Parliament I'm standing.

MASTER. No, indeed, for you see this job is permanent, so 'tis very cheap. We'll say three.

O'ROURKE. I must take time to consider.

FLAHERTY. He'll give £250 for certain, Tom. Let's take it.

MASTER. No, 'twon't do, I tell you. Look what we lost already. Goodbye, O'Rourke. Send us word soon, and I hope you'll be our new dispensary doctor.

O'ROURKE. Thanks, Mr. Dooley, and Mr. Chairman. I'll tell my brother the member how kind you were to me. (*Exit*).

FLAHERTY. How did I get on there, my nimble old thief. By the Jews' harp of the piper that played before Moses, but I'm learning the tricks of the trade.

MASTER. Faith, that's no lie. You did it as well as if you were what I think you may be one of these fine days—a man of manes.

FLAHERTY. Praises, boys, I hope I will.

MASTER (*in a stage whisper*). But ochone and wiristrue, what's that outside I see. A lovely female that will be sure to put the come-hether on him and another old mother begging for bread, I suppose. Get to your work, worthy Chairman, and sign the documents (*pointing to a huge pile of papers*). (*Aside*). I go, like the Sergeant, and interrogate them. (*Exit*).

FLAHERTY (*signing papers*). Church and State alike, you see, must come to me. C.B.G.'s the job and no mistake. (MASTER *returns*).

MASTER. If I hadn't the work outside. The loveliest female I see this twenty years. Why, he'd have stood on his head in the chair before a full board if she only expressed a wish to see his agility. I've told her, however, he's down feeding with the lunatics, and I'd get two strong paupers to take her to him, and with that, the saints be good to us, she tuck to her heels. The other is a harmless old cratur. I think it's safe to leave her see him alone. (*Calls in an old decent COUNTRY WOMAN*).

WOMAN. Are you the Chairman of the Board, your honour?

FLAHERTY. I am then so, mother. Is it an old age pension or outdoor relief? Say the word. Here's the cheque-book.

WOMAN. Neither, thank you kindly, sir. Me and my family have held their heads high always. But you want a doctor for the dispensary?

FLAHERTY. A knowledgeable woman, there's no doubt, and I wouldn't say but she'd be good, too. By the ghost of a pink rabbit, I hope 't isn't a lady doctor you are.

WOMAN. Not that either; 't isn't for myself I'm looking. What would a lone woman, and she old at that, want of the like? But I live

high up in the mountain with my daughter's little child. 'Way out beyond the great sea are all mine, besides.

FLAHERTY. 'Tis lonely, indeed, you must be up there, granny.

WOMAN. True for you, allay. When the great winds moan and the mountain shivers with the stroke 'tis desolate indeed.

FLAHERTY. Faith 'tis that.

WOMAN. And only the low breathing of a little child, you feel, keeps God's wrath off from crushing you.

FLAHERTY. The Lord preserve us.

WOMAN. December twelve months last my little flower fell sick. The snow hurled by my door with a mocking cry. All night the child of my heart lay on her bed of pain, and next day the neighbours called the doctor.

FLAHERTY. 'Twas good of them, but sure it was no use.

WOMAN. I laughed to think he'd come.

FLAHERTY. True for you. Money down's their motto like my own.

WOMAN. He was with me soon, and all that long night, like her own mother, he watched beside her bed.

FLAHERTY. I'd like to know him. 'Tis a brick he is and no mistake.

WOMAN. And she's with me and alive to-day.

FLAHERTY. Good man himself. Not Hegarty, sure.

WOMAN. No, but one that did his work. 'Twas Hyde they call him. Then and now I have but prayers to offer. Give him the job and God will prosper you, for the widow's word goes far above.

FLAHERTY (*aside*). My poor Noneen. (*Aloud*). I'll not refuse you. (*Aside*). 'Tis fairy gold, I see, the Leprecaun just passed on me. My vote is for your man, however, and my casting vote as well. I must resign the C.B.G. and enter in the workhouse gate myself.

WOMAN. The Lord, you see, will give you your reward. I thank you kindly. (*Exit*).

FLAHERTY. 'Twas the divil himself and not a Leprecaun I caught. Who's this at all? For outdoor relief, I'm sure. I wish, begor, I could work some for myself. (LEPRECAUN *enters*).

FLAHERTY (*not recognising* LEPRECAUN). Sure the outdoor relief is all spent, and the old age pensions haven't come. Be off. I'm busy. How do I know but that Leprecaun made some bungle of it for me as he did for others.

LEPRECAUN. Really, now, Paddy Flaherty, nice welcome for the man that med you.

FLAHERTY. Be the black cross on Judy Callaghan's white donkey, if 't isn't the deludering old vagabone himself. I'll demolish you, you rascal while a cat would be hopping the twig.

CLURICAUN. Aisy there, my friend, go slow. Aren't you C.B.G. with a casting vote?

FLAHERTY. The divil give me good of it, I am, and well you know it.

CLURICAUN. You are, and Mauve, my queen, is pleased with you.

FLAHERTY. 'Tis more than I am myself, I promise you.

CLURICAUN. And while you live you'll hold the post and prosper. (*Exit*).

MASTER (*rushing in*). A sealed order! A sealed order!

FLAHERTY. Yeah, get out the old ferry-boat, Lord High Admiral, and hunt for submarines in the Lower Lake. What's the matter with you at all, at all?

MASTER. I'm dismissed my office by the Local Government Board. (*Goes off howling*).

FLAHERTY. More misfortune. I'm thinking 'tishn't a sealed order but an open warrant to send me to gaol will soon arrive. Not, however, before I put my heavy curse upon the Leprecaun. Begor I'll take my coat off to put venom into it. May the——

(*Girl and man enter. Girl is NONEEN*).

NONEEN. Father, father, and they told me you were with the lunatics.

FLAHERTY. Faith, an' if the truth were known that's where I should be. 'Tis my own little girl. Ah, my daisy, come to my heart. I

must have one good look at you, my child, before you go back to Dublin, for I'm a ruined man.

NONEEN. And, father, there's someone I want to make known to you. He's been down here before, December twelve months, and we're to marry if he gets the dispensary. He's Dr. Hyde.

FLAHERTY. By every drop that's in the river Blackwater, and I was going to curse the Lepre-caun. My hand to you, Doctor; I'll guarantee this time you'll get the job. I see it all. (*Skip-ping about the stage and singing*):

“ For you must all acknowledge, oh !
I made good use of college, oh ! ”

Hurroo ! you'll have my vote, Doctor. You can go bail for it. Begor, this time I'll take my oath by the tip of the tongue, with which Biddy Moriarty lashed Daniel O'Connell, we'll be all unanimous and to hell with the casting vote.

END.

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